

CALFED BAY-DELTA WATERSHED PROGRAM

BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting Summary

The Bay-Delta Advisory Council (BDAC) Watershed Work Group met on January 8, 1999, in Sacramento. The BDAC Watershed Work Group (Work Group) was created to address the public's request to have more participation in the CALFED Watershed Program (Watershed Program). The Work Group provides a forum for stakeholders covering a broad geographic area and wide array of interests. Attendees of the Work Group meetings have direct interaction with the Watershed Program's Interagency Watershed Advisory Team (IWAT) and an opportunity to review and comment on Watershed Program draft documents. In addition, the Work Group may provide input to the BDAC on issues related to the Watershed Program.

Introductions

Work Group co-chair, Robert Meacher (BDAC/Regional Council for Rural Counties), began the meeting with introductions. A list of meeting participants is included (Attachment A). A meeting agenda and the Draft Watershed Program Plan (Program Plan), dated January 8, 1999, were distributed.

It was announced that Martha Dayis may resign from BDAC and her position as Work Group co-chair due to a possible conflict of interest with her current employer.

Update: Martha has resigned from BDAC; however, we are happy to announce that she will continue to participate as the Work Group's co-chair.

CALFED Schedule

The CALFED Common Program Plans are scheduled to be released the week of January 11, 1999. The Program Plans provide support to the Revised Phase II Report which was issued to the public on December 18, 1998. The Revised Phase II Report illustrates a framework for a preferred alternative including a summary of the eight Program elements. The document may be viewed on CALFED's webpage: <http://calfed.ca.gov>.

Update: Due to additional editing and reproduction orders, the CALFED Common Program Plans were slightly off schedule and released on February 16, 1999. The documents are now available on the CALFED webpage. A hard-copy of the Watershed Program Plan will be mailed to the Work Group meeting participants in late February 1999.

John Lowrie (Watershed Program Manager) thanked the Work Group for their efforts over the past few months with the development of the Watershed Program Plan. He recognized that the Implementation Strategy needs refinement and requested that the Work Group assist with the development. The Watershed Program staff agreed to provide an implementation framework at the next Work Group meeting.

A revised Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report/Statement (Programmatic EIR/EIS) is scheduled to be released in May 1999, and will have a sixty-day comment period. Similar to the last draft, appendices will include updated versions of the Common Program Plans. A Final Programmatic EIR/EIS is expected to be released in December 1999, with implementation following early 2000.

Update: It is likely that CALFED will set the above-mentioned schedule back by six months. This would push the Draft Programmatic EIR/EIS back to the first of the year 2000, and the Final document to June 2000. Implementation would begin soon after the Record of Decision.

Letter to CALFED

Several key items have been raised repeatedly during the past few Work Group meetings. The Work Group agreed that these important issues should be compiled into a letter to CALFED. Co-chairs, Robert Meacher and Martha Davis, have both agreed to draft a letter. The Work Group suggested that the following issues be included in the letter:

1. ***Integration of the Common Programs*** - The integration, collaboration, and communication among the Common Programs needs to be improved. For example, some Programs have jettisoned items from their Program Plans and referred them to the Watershed Program unbeknownst to the Watershed Program staff.
2. ***Modification of CALFED's Analysis Approach*** - CALFED should strongly focus their efforts on Stage I - the first seven years of implementation, not 20 - 30 years.
3. ***Watershed Program Financing*** - Because the Watershed Program is taking a different approach from the other Common Programs and relying on the local watershed communities to help determine appropriate projects, the Watershed Program has not yet identified specific watershed projects. As a result, the Watershed Program's budget for the first year has been cut. It is important that CALFED management understand the Watershed Program's strategy and resist future budget cuts based on the assumption that no specific projects have been identified.
4. In addition to the above issues, it was suggested that the letter also include a discussion on ***stakeholder recognition***. CALFED should recognize the value of utilizing and compensating local watershed groups. Local groups can be a valuable tool to disseminate information to the public and help dispel misconceptions and/or fear of CALFED. Furthermore, CALFED should capitalize on this value now, not wait until Stage I. Engaging local watershed groups now could greatly influence the CALFED Program.

Mr. Meacher has agreed to work with Ms. Davis to compile these issues and draft a letter to CALFED. Mr. Meacher will provide a progress report at the next Work Group meeting.

Additions to Stage I Actions

John Lowrie (Watershed Program Manager/NRCS) explained that two significant actions have been added to the Watershed Program's Stage I actions. These actions stem from the negotiations with Secretary Babbitt and other key government officials. The new actions are as follows:

- Work with stakeholders and the Legislature to develop a statewide umbrella watershed management act.
- With the consent of project owners/operators, perform reoperation analysis for existing hydroelectric power reservoirs under 500,000 acre-feet capacity (except SWP, CVP, and Corps of Engineers reservoirs) to benefit local and downstream water users, water quality, and the environment. With consent of project owners/operators, implement changes in operations, including funding of acquisitions, where appropriate.

Development of a Watershed Management Act

Mr. Meacher informed the Work Group that he and Ms. Davis were approached by Lester Snow, Executive Director of CALFED, requesting that they lead an effort to develop a statewide umbrella watershed management act. Mr. Meacher and Ms. Davis have since been working with their respective organizations - RCRC and Sierra Nevada Alliance - in developing draft legislation. After a more complete draft is developed, Mr. Meacher proposed that the Work Group peer review the document.

The Work Group agreed, but also stated that some participants would like to have a more active role. Creators of the legislation should capitalize on the resources that the Work Group has to offer. Several of the Work Group participants have experience and knowledge with legislation and would like to be involved in the development of the watershed legislation. Mr. Lowrie concurred and stated that this task will need the involvement of multiple interest to be successful.

Dennis Bowker (Napa County RCD/CALFED) also mentioned that it would be very beneficial for the creators of the legislation to scan other watershed legislation both in and out of California.

Other states, such as Oregon and Washington, have already passed statewide watershed management acts. There is no need for the Watershed Program to "re-invent the wheel."

A sign-up sheet was distributed for those participants wanting to be involved in the development of the watershed management legislation. Mr. Meacher will provide a progress report to the entire Work Group at the next meeting.

Hydroelectric Power Reservoirs Re-operation Analysis

Otis Wollan (Placer County Water Agency (PCWA)) shared some information regarding the operations of PG&E reservoirs. PG&E is responsible for approximately three to four million

acre-feet of storage. Recent studies have shown that there is some flexibility in PG&E's operational regime. Currently, the storage water is conservatively managed, however, it was found that additional water could be made available during critical times if water supply were the objective versus power production. Mr. Wollan also raised a concern regarding the PG&E's divestiture of hydro-power plants, spinning them off to a PG&E subsidiary named US GEN. This divestiture would allow US GEN to go unregulated by the California Public Utilities Commission. This is a concern because unlike PG&E who manage for in-stream benefits and power production, US GEN could manage solely for power production.

The Work Group agreed that a re-operation analysis of existing hydroelectric power reservoirs is an important issue. However, there was some discussion of whether or not it is an appropriate action for the Watershed Program versus the Water Transfers or Ecosystem Restoration Programs. Mr. Lowrie suggested that the Watershed Program staff look further into the matter. In addition, the staff will compile and analyze existing information on the subject and report back to the Work Group in the near future.

Wrap-Up

It was agreed that future Work Group meetings will be held on the third Friday of each month. The next meeting will be held on February 19, 1999, in Sacramento.

Name	Affiliation
Allutt, Rob	East Bay Municipal Utilities District
Allen, Bob	Burney Forest Power
Aumack, Laurie	Battle Creek Watershed Project
Barris, Lynn	Butte Environmental Council
Briden, Laurie	CA Department of Fish and Game
Bowker, Dennis	Napa County RCD/CALFED
Carpenter, Mark	Westlands Water District
Cheechov, Walt	Natural Resources Conservation District
Cooper Carter, Kristin	CSU/Chico Research Foundation/Environmental Resource Program
Coulter, Ken	State Water Resources Control Board
Cornelius, James	Tetra Tech
Cornwall, Caitlin	Sonoma Ecology Center
DeVries, Joe	
Drake, Nettie	Panoche/Silver Creek CCRMP
DuBois, Bill	CA Farm Bureau Federation
Hammerling, Eric	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Harthorn, Allen	Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy
Heiman, Dennis	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board - Redding
Henly, Russ	CA Department of Forestry/IWAT
Holt, Buford	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Howard, Liz	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Huang, Charlie	CA Department of Fish and Game
Jerauld, Frank	Amador RCD - Jackson
Kavvas, M.L.	UC Davis - Department of Engineering
Kie, Marti	CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Knecht, Mary Lee	Jones & Stokes/CALFED Watershed Program
Lowrie, John	USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service/CALFED
MacLaggan, Peter	California Urban Water Agencies
Mannion, Kathy	WGA
Marsh, Lindell	Siemon, Larsen & Marsh
Meacher, Robert	Regional Council of Rural Counties/BDAC
Nakamura, Gary	Shasta-Tehama Bioregional Council
Nelson, Earl	Western Area Power Administration
Newlin, Vickie	Butte County Water Division
Niles, Cheryl	
Parkin, Ann Marie	Metropolitan Water District
Prillwitz, Marsha	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Pye, Katy	Yolo County Resource Conservation District
Ramos, Susan	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Rentz, Mark	California Forestry Association
Rustiac, Russell	Eastlake Resource Conservation District
Sansoni, Aldo	San Luis Canal Company
Sapunor, Mike	City of San Jose ESD
Sime, Fraser	CA Department of Water Resources

Thomas, Jeanette

Stockton East Water District

Thomas, Rick

Metropolitan Water District

Trott, Chris

Ogden Energy

Troyan, Jerry

Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District

Tums, D.A.

Tupper, Julie

U.S. Forest Service/IWAT

White, Mark

Placer County Resource County District

White, Sean

Sonoma County Water Agency

Wills, Leah

Plumas Corporation

Wollan, Otis

Placer County Water Agency



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